

**Introduced by Senator Perata**

February 22, 2001

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An act to add Sections 4341.6, 4341.7, 4341.8, 4341.9, 4342, 4342.1, and 4342.2 to the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to mental health.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 632, as introduced, Perata. Mental health training.

Existing law contains various provisions relating to the training of mental health professionals.

This bill would require the State Department of Mental Health, when adequate funding is provided, to establish a regional training center to develop these skills of those already employed in the public mental health system in order to collaborate regionally with high school, community college, undergraduate, and graduate educational programs on curriculum and special program development and on expanding the capacity of graduate programs for the mental health professions as well as supporting and increasing the number of undergraduates seeking degrees in mental health-related fields who seek employment in mental health care.

The bill would also require the department to offer forgivable loans to current full-time employees of counties and to full-time employees of nonprofit agencies whose services are funded primarily through county mental health contracts, who seek to continue working part time or full time while obtaining a master's or doctorate degree in a mental health profession, subject to specified conditions.

The bill would also establish the Human Service Academies Program, within the department. It would require that these academies be joint ventures between school districts and a mental health

organization, and would limit the number of programs to be funded based upon the availability of funds in the annual Budget Act.

This bill would require the Department of Corrections, the State Department of Mental Health, and the University of California, with the consent of the regents, to jointly develop proposals, for submission to the Legislature, to expand the number of residencies and internships for psychiatrists through the University of California, in conjunction with placements in state-owned hospitals and prisons and county-operated or funded public mental health programs.

This bill would require the Chancellor's office of the California State University, in conjunction with the State Department of Mental Health, the State Department of Social Services, county welfare directors and county mental health directors, and the California Council of Community Mental Health Agencies, to develop programs to expand the number of master's degree positions offered in social work, including internships at publicly funded mental health, child welfare, and child protective services programs that utilize social workers.

This bill would also require the Department of Corrections, the State Department of Mental Health, and county mental health directors to work in partnership with the California State University, Sacramento, community colleges, and other institutions that train nurses, in order to develop a proposal for submission to the Legislature, to increase the number of nurse practitioners who will be qualified to work in publicly funded mental health services.

This bill would establish, in the State Department of Mental Health, the Mental Health Services Stabilization Program, under which, in any year in which funds are appropriated for this program by the Budget Act, funds shall be allocated by the department to counties based upon their relative difficulty and need in employing and retaining specialized mental health staff.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

- 1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
- 2 following:
- 3 (a) There is a critical human resources crisis due to the lack of
- 4 mental health professionals.



(b) This human resources crisis affects the following settings in which a mental health professional is required:

- (1) Publicly funded county mental health services.
- (2) State hospitals.
- (3) Department of Corrections.
- (4) Child welfare services, including child protective services and group homes.
- (5) School-based mental health services.
- (6) Private insurance funded mental health care, which is expected to increase significantly in implementing mental health parity legislation enacted pursuant to Assembly Bill 88, Chapter 534 of the Statutes of 1999.

(7) Compliance with court ordered increases in mental health care to be provided to prisoners in the Department of Corrections facilities.

(8) Required mental health care to youths in California Youth Authority and county probation programs.

(c) There is an insufficient number of slots in academic programs to develop psychiatrists, social workers, and nurse practitioners for students interested in mental health professions.

(d) Specifically, the University of California needs to increase the capacity to educate psychiatrists, the California State University needs to increase the capacity to educate licensed social workers, and numerous public and private institutions need to increase capacity to educate new nurse practitioners with expertise in mental health.

(e) In the short term, our best opportunity to obtain more mental health professionals is to offer financial incentives for people currently employed in mental health programs, but not having a mental health license, to return to school while continuing to work on a part-time basis, in order to obtain their degree.

(f) In addition to creating new opportunities for people currently employed, we need to create greater interest among people. We also need to develop greater interest in mental health professionals by starting with youth in high school to interest them in human services. A successful model of a human service academy established by the Los Angeles Unified School District and the Mental Health Association of Los Angeles is already showing promise in getting more young people to go to college by providing peer support to one another and has the promise to lead

1 to more mental health professionals. Programs like this should be  
2 expanded throughout the state.

3 (g) The Department of Corrections is currently not able to  
4 comply with a court order which previously held the department  
5 in violation of the United States Constitution for not providing  
6 adequate medical care to prisoners. One of the consistent findings  
7 of the special master appointed by the court is that the department  
8 has not been able to hire a sufficient number of psychiatrists to  
9 provide the necessary care.

10 SEC. 2. Section 4341.6 is added to the Welfare and  
11 Institutions Code, to read:

12 4341.6. (a) The State Department of Mental Health shall  
13 establish a regional training center to develop the skills of those  
14 already employed in the public mental health system in order to  
15 collaborate regionally with high school, community college,  
16 undergraduate, and graduate educational programs on curriculum  
17 and special program development and on expanding the capacity  
18 of graduate programs for the mental health professions as well as  
19 supporting and increasing the number of undergraduates seeking  
20 degrees in mental health-related fields who seek employment in  
21 mental health care.

22 (b) The regional training center shall be established to do all of  
23 the following:

24 (1) Facilitate collaboration between the educational system and  
25 the mental health system.

26 (2) Offer classes on the public mental health system to students  
27 at all levels of education, including associate degree, bachelor's  
28 degree, master's degree, and doctorate degree levels, as well as to  
29 physicians and surgeons, in order to augment the curriculum  
30 provided in colleges and universities.

31 (3) Utilize county mental health staff and community-based  
32 agency staff to provide training courses that would be approved for  
33 credit in the student's curriculum.

34 (4) Develop a web-based distance learning program to link  
35 students to the regional mental health training classes.

36 (5) Develop curriculum that combines courses offered by  
37 different entities.

38 (6) Facilitate field placement of college students into county  
39 mental health programs and community-based agencies.



(7) Conduct extensive outreach to inform students of opportunities for field placements, including meetings on mental health professions with psychology and social work student affairs officers using professionals and consumers.

(8) Train professors about the availability of field placements.

(9) Develop a web-based clearinghouse to link employers and employees and disseminate best practices for school-to-employment career paths. The website shall describe a seamless progression of career path options.

(10) Conduct outreach to high school students to promote interest in the mental health field, including the development of field placements for these students.

(11) Provide in-service training on a regional basis to current county mental health staff and community-based agency staff.

(c) This section shall be implemented only during fiscal years in which the Director of Mental Health determines that sufficient funds have been appropriated to implement this section.

SEC. 3. Section 4341.7 is added to the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

4341.7. (a) The State Department of Mental Health shall offer forgivable loans to current full-time employees of counties and to full-time employees of nonprofit agencies whose services are funded primarily through county mental health contracts, who meet all of the following conditions:

(1) Have a bachelor's degree.

(2) Seek to continue working part time while obtaining a master's or doctorate degree in a mental health profession.

(3) Agree to work full time in a county or county funded nonprofit agency for four years after obtaining the master's degree.

(b) A loan offered pursuant to subdivision (a) shall pay for the cost of tuition and related education costs, the difference between the part-time pay and the full-time pay that was being earned at the time the education begins for the degree being sought, and the annual payments due on undergraduate education loans.

(c) Twenty-five percent of the loan shall be forgiven for each year that the individual remains in full-time employment in a county mental health program or a program of a private nonprofit agency whose services are paid for primarily with county mental health funds.

(d) The number of loans offered each year shall be based upon funds appropriated annually for this purpose by the Budget Act.

(e) The department shall establish an advisory committee including representatives of county mental health departments, private nonprofit mental health agencies, and other relevant organizations to provide advice in establishing criteria for determining the distribution of the loans.

(f) The loan distribution criteria shall give priority to bilingual or bicultural applicants, and to applicants indicating a commitment to be employed in rural areas or other areas where there is the greatest shortage of mental health professionals.

SEC. 4. Section 4341.8 is added to the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

4341.8. (a) There is hereby established the Human Service Academies Program within the State Department of Mental Health.

(b) The department shall issue a request for proposals to expand the number of human service academies based on the program currently established as a joint effort by the Mental Health Association of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles Unified School District. The number of programs to be funded shall be based upon funding appropriated annually for this purpose in the Budget Act.

(c) Each application for funding shall represent a joint venture of a school district and a mental health organization.

SEC. 5. Section 4341.9 is added to the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

4341.9. The Department of Corrections, the State Department of Mental Health, and the University of California, with the consent of the regents, shall jointly develop proposals to expand the number of residencies and internships for psychiatrists through the University of California, in conjunction with placements in state-owned hospitals and prisons and county operated or funded public mental health programs. Proposals shall be submitted to the Legislature by March 1, 2002, in order that the Legislature may consider the need for any statutory change or funding mechanism for implementation of these proposals.

SEC. 6. Section 4342 is added to the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

4342. The Chancellor's office of the California State University, in conjunction with the State Department of Mental

1 Health, the State Department of Social Services, county welfare  
2 directors and county mental health directors, and the California  
3 Council of Community Mental Health Agencies, shall develop  
4 programs to expand the number of master's degree positions  
5 offered in social work, including internships at publicly funded  
6 mental health, child welfare, and child protective services  
7 programs that utilize social workers.

8 SEC. 7. Section 4342.1 is added to the Welfare and  
9 Institutions Code, to read:

10 4342.1. The Department of Corrections, the State Department  
11 of Mental Health, and county mental health directors shall work  
12 in partnership with the California State University, Sacramento,  
13 community colleges, and other institutions that train nurses, in  
14 order to develop a proposal to increase the number of nurse  
15 practitioners who will be qualified to work in publicly funded  
16 mental health services. These programs shall include internships  
17 and publicly funded mental health service programs. The proposal  
18 shall be submitted to the Legislature by March 1, 2002, in order  
19 that the Legislature may consider the need for any statutory change  
20 or funding mechanism for implementation of this proposal.

21 SEC. 8. Section 4342.2 is added to the Welfare and  
22 Institutions Code, to read:

23 4342.2. (a) There is hereby established in the State  
24 Department of Mental Health, the Mental Health Services  
25 Stabilization Program. In any year in which funds are appropriated  
26 for this program by the Budget Act, funds shall be allocated by the  
27 department to counties based upon their relative difficulty and  
28 need in employing and retaining specialized mental health staff.  
29 The department shall utilize the task force referred to in Section  
30 4341.1 to provide guidance in setting forth criteria for allocations  
31 and rules for utilization of funds under this program.

32 (b) Counties that accept funds under the program shall utilize  
33 these funds to increase salaries for mental health services  
34 providers who are employees of county programs or employees of  
35 county-funded programs operated by private nonprofit agencies  
36 whose salaries are not competitive with other employment  
37 opportunities for the selected classes of employees. First priority  
38 for salary increases shall be given to employees of private

- 1 nonprofit agencies whose salaries are more than 10 percent below
- 2 salaries for comparable positions of county employees.

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